



Nutrition Facts

Prevent Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Does your child:

- *Get a naptime or bedtime bottle with juice, sugar water, milk or formula?*
- *Walk around or sit with a bottle during the day?*

If so, your infant or child may be at increased risk for tooth decay!

What is Baby Bottle tooth decay?

It is a *serious* dental disease that can destroy the teeth of your infant or young child.

How does this happen?

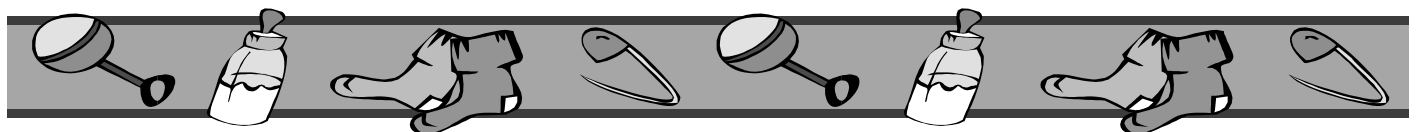
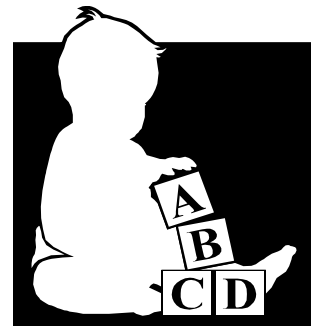
A child's teeth can rot when they have a bedtime bottle with juice, sugar water, milk or formula or if your child walks around or sits with a bottle during the day.

Why does this happen?

The sugar in milk, formula, juice and sweetened drinks can rot the teeth if it stays in the baby's mouth too long.

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay causes:

- Pain
- Many cavities
- Crooked permanent teeth
- Ear and speech problem



Baby bottle tooth decay does not have to happen!

Be sure to trade the bottle for a cup by one year of age. Begin by teaching your baby to drink from a cup at six months of age. Praise your child and make it a sharing time. By age 12 months, your child will prefer drinking from a cup.



Proper use of the bottle is the first step in preventing dental problems.

- Bottles are used to feed babies who are not yet able to drink from a cup.
- Offer the bottle only at feeding times. Do not let baby carry a bottle around at other times. A bottle is not a toy or pacifier.
- Sleeping times are not feeding times. Do not put baby to bed with a bottle.

Other helpful tips

If your child has become attached to the bottle, it may be a difficult habit to break. Your child may cry or fight giving up the bottle. Take bottles away gradually. Most babies do not want to give up the bottle all at once. Try these tips to help stop the bottle habit:

- Dilute the liquid you usually put in the bottle until there is only water.
- Use a pacifier.
- Occupy them by reading or telling a story.
- Give a security blanket or a teddy bear.



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Adapted from University of California, Davis, Agriculture Department and California Department of Health Services WIC Supplemental Nutrition Branch

